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CLAIMS

1.   A method for defining a metadata structure relating to
media materials, concepts and services, the method
comprising the steps of:
5   defining a plurality of storage entities at a plurality
of levels for metadata relating to media materials, concepts
and services, the storage entities having a plurality of
storage elements and being related with a media metadata
subject grouping, and arranged in hierarchical and non-
10   hierarchical relationships allowing an appropriate
combination of elements as required;
storing metadata relating to a given storage entity in
one of a plurality of storage elements of the entity at that
level, each storage element representing an attribute or
15   characteristic of the entity subject or media material;
arranging media metadata entities and attributes
relating directly to the media material, concepts and
services in hierarchical and non-hierarchical entity level
relationships allowing an appropriate combination of
20   elements are required; and
wherein for hierarchical entities, the storage elements
of storage entities at a level apart from the lowest level,
comprise the storage elements of the immediately lower
storage level.

25   2.   A method according to claim 1, wherein the storage
entities include an editorial object concept entity which
may give rise to one or more editorial object version
entities, wherein the metadata stored within the editorial
object concept entity is related to the editorial object
30   version entity, the version entity comprising the
immediately lower storage level.

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3.   A method according to claim 2, wherein the storage entities include a programme version level and an item version level, the programme version level and the item version level being subtypes of the editorial object version.

4.   A method according to claim 3, wherein the storage entities include a media object level, and the programme version and item version entities are related to media object metadata, the media objects comprising the immediate lower level.

5.   A method according to claim 4, wherein the media object level includes occurrences of individual media types as sub types.

6.   A method according to claim 5, wherein the media object includes an audio level subtype and the storage elements relate to audio metadata.

7.   A method according to claim 5, wherein the media object level includes a text level sub-type and the metadata storage elements relate to text metadata.

8.   A method according to claim 5, wherein the media object level includes a graphics level subtype and the media object level storage elements relate to graphics metadata.

9.   A method according to claim 5, wherein the media object level includes a stills level subtype and the media object level storage elements relate to stills metadata.

10.   A method according to claim 1, further comprising storing the entity and attribute definitions as a metadata dictionary, wherein metadata occurrences are defined to be consistent with the metadata dictionary.

11. A method according to Claim 10, wherein the dictionary further includes acceptable synonyms for at least some of the metadata.

12. A method according to claim 1 further comprising defining a plurality of levels of business stores each comprising business elements each relating to business metadata, the business stores being linked to the metadata stores at a storage level dependent on the business element metadata.

13. A method according to claim 12, wherein one of the plurality of levels of business stores comprises a rights level comprising one or more related entities containing business metadata identifying legal rights attached to the media material, the business metadata including the legal jurisdiction of the right, the geographical territory of the right, the duration of the right and the owner of the right.

14. A method according to claim 1 wherein the media material is a radio, television or Internet material or associated or derived product.

15. A method according to claim 1, wherein the storage levels cover the distributed media supply chain extending from service proposition to audience consumption.

16. A method according to claim 1, comprising defining a plurality of mutually consistent hierarchies of storage levels.

17. A method of defining a standard media exchange framework comprising the steps of:
defining a media metadata structure according to the method of claim 1,
defining a process flow model reflecting the media production and distribution chain; and

defining metadata items for exchange between one
process in the media production and distribution chain and
another.

18.   A data structure for defining broadcast media metadata
comprising:

      a plurality of storage entities for metadata relating
to media materials, concepts and services, the entities
being arranged in storage levels and each entity comprising
a plurality of storage elements each for storing metadata
relating to a given entity, each storage element
representing an attribute or characteristic of the entity
subject or the media material;

      wherein the storage levels are hierarchical and non-
hierarchical allowing the appropriate combination of
elements as required, where the levels are hierarchical, the
storage elements of storage entities, apart from the lowest
level, comprise the stores of the immediately lower storage
level.

19.   A structure according to claim 18, wherein the storage
entities include an editorial object concept entity which
may give rise to one or more editorial object version
entities, wherein the metadata stored within the editorial
object concept entity is related to the editorial object
version entity, the editorial object version entity
comprising the immediately lower storage level.

20.   A structure according to claim 19, wherein the storage
entities include an item version level and a programme
version level, each of the item version level and the
programme version level being subtypes of the editorial
objection version entity.

21.   A structure according to claim 20, wherein the
programme version and item version entities relate to media

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object metadata, the media objects comprising the immediately lower level.

22. A structure according to claim 21, wherein the media object level includes occurrences of individual media types as subtypes.

23. A structure according to claim 22, wherein the media object level includes an audio level subtype and the storage elements relate to audio metadata.

24. A structure according to claim 22, wherein the media object level includes a text level subtype and the storage elements relate to text metadata.

25. A structure according to claim 22, wherein the media object level includes a graphics level and the storage elements relate to graphics metadata.

26. A structure according to claim 22, wherein the media object level includes a stills level and the media object level storage elements relate to stills metadata.

27. A structure according to claim 18, further comprising a metadata dictionary having stored therein entity and attribute definitions, wherein the metadata occurrences are defined to be consistent with the metadata dictionary.

28. A structure according to claim 27, wherein the dictionary further includes acceptable synonyms for at least some of the metadata.

29. A structure according to any of claims 18 to 28 comprising entities relating to editorial requirements and entities relating to instantiation requirements.

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30.   A structure according to claim 18 further comprising
a plurality of levels of business entities each comprising
storage elements related to business metadata, the business
elements being linked to the media metadata entities at a
storage level dependent on the business element metadata.

31.   A structure according to claim 30, wherein one of the
plurality of levels of business storage elements comprises
a rights level and includes one or more entities containing
business metadata identifying legal rights attached to the
media material, the business metadata including the legal
jurisdiction of the right, the geographical territory of the
right, the duration of the right and the owner of the right.

32.   A structure according to claim 18 wherein the media
material is a radio, television or Internet material or
associated or derived product.

33.   A structure according to claim 18, wherein the storage
levels cover the broadcast media supply chain extending from
service proposition to audience consumption.

34.   A structure according to claim 18, including a
plurality of mutually consistent hierarchies of storage
levels.

35.   A data structure for defining media metadata
comprising:
        a plurality of storage entities for metadata relating
to media production and distribution, the entities being
arranged at storage levels and each entity comprising a
plurality of storage elements each holding metadata relating
to a given entity level, each storage element representing
an attribute or characteristic of the entity subject or the
media material;
        a plurality of levels of business entities each
comprising storage elements storing business metadata, the

business entities being linked to the metadata stores at a storage level dependent on the business element metadata, one of the plurality of levels of business stores comprising a rights level and having one or more storage entities containing business metadata identifying legal rights attached to the media material, the business metadata including the legal jurisdiction of the right, the geographical territory of the right, the duration of the right and the owner of the right;

wherein the metadata storage levels are hierarchical and non-hierarchical and, for hierarchical storage levels, the metadata stored in the storage elements of storage entities at a level, apart from the lowest level comprise the stores of the immediately lower storage level.

36.   A   data   structure   for   defining   media   metadata comprising:

a plurality of storage entities for metadata relating to media production and distribution, the entities being arranged at storage levels and each entity comprising a plurality of storage elements each holding metadata relating to a given entity level, each storage element representing an attribute or characteristic of the entity subject or the media material;

a rights store linked to at least one of the metadata stores and comprising one or more storage entities containing business metadata identifying legal rights attached to the media material, the business metadata including the legal jurisdiction of the right, the geographical territory of the right, the duration of the right and the owner of the right;

wherein the metadata storage levels are hierarchical and non-hierarchical and, for hierarchical storage levels, the metadata stored in the storage elements of storage entities at a level, apart from the lowest level, comprise the stores of the immediately lower storage level.